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BRONZE SITULA

Etruscan, 6th century, B. C.

Mary B. Jackson Fund, 1932

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ETRUSCAN ART

Introduction. In issuing an Etruscan number of the Bulletin the Museum does so to call attention to the high merit of the artists of a race who lived many centuries ago, who influenced to a decided degree the history of their day, and whose culture is a part of our heritage of the past.

Geography. The land of Etruria was on the western side of Italy, roughly bounded by the Apennines on the east, the Po river on the north, the Tiber on the south, and the Tyrrhenian Sea on the west. The shores of the sea were low and flat. A broad plain, the Maremma, stretched back to the outlying spurs of the Apennines. These latter offered ideal sites for the type of fortress-cities called for by the times. Others were on detached hills nearer the coast. There were valued salt mines on the south near the Tiber which were the cause of contention with the Romans. The nearness to the sea led the Etruscans to be sailors, first for years in legitimate trade, and later, perhaps for political reasons, to become pirates.

History. Recent excavations, together with the evidence of earlier finds support the theory that the Etruscans came from Asia Minor or some of the islands contiguous to it. Somewhere about the 9th century B. C. they reached Italy by sea, coming in small groups. They overcame the native tribes, founded their cities on the hills, and in the course of succeeding years extended their frontiers north and south. In the north they encountered the Villanovans, in the south the Romans, who had found it necessary to unite at the present site of Rome to defend the ford of the Tiber. As both parties waxed in power, friction naturally increased. The maximum of the power of the Etruscans is perhaps about 500 B. C., but from then on a group of forces led to her rapid decline. She was unable to overcome the rising power of the Roman confederation; her own political problems, with rivalry between city states, prevented a coalition to offset Roman aggression; and the general spirit of the race grew luxury-loving in the extreme. While the Etruscan

priesthood lasted until the fourth century A. D., and for years Etruria supplied the Roman and Greek world with art objects, it was as a race wholly subject to Roman domination after the fourth century, B. C.

Arts. A summary of Etruscan art presents an interesting picture from the eighth century to the fourth century B. C. In its earliest form it combined eastern motives and treatment with certain characteristic forms of the natives who are called Villanovans or Umbrians. This orientalizing element increases rather than diminishes, and doubtless reflects the influence of the large commerce with the eastern part of the Mediterranean which was developed. That is why we so often find Asia Minor, Hittite, Phoenician or Egyptian details adapted to the new use. From 700 to 625 B. C., the strongest influence is Phoenician, then it shifts to Greek in its emphasis. Its decadence runs concurrently with its political downfall.

The Etruscans' chief reason, from the point of view of the arts, for settling where they did, is first that they were, by instinct and training, workers in metals, and in Etruria they had at hand the copper, tin, lead and silver mines of Tuscany itself, while the rich deposits of iron and copper on the island of Elba were easily accessible. Small wonder, then, that the chief art interest of the Etruscans was in metal work. Gold was easily procurable through their commerce with Egypt, etc.

Again we find the Etruscans achieving distinction among their fellows for their work in terra cotta, in particular for their pottery, ornaments on the temples such as acroteria, etc., and for their sculpture for the pediments. This fact has peculiar interest when we recall that centuries later, in the days of the Italian Renaissance, it was in Tuscany that preëminence in the field of terra cotta is found. This can hardly be wholly coincidence.

The best way to know the fascination of Etruscan art is to see it. While the greater part must be seen in Italy as, for example, at Rome, Tarquinia, Arezzo, Perugia, Orvieto, Bologna, Ancona, etc., one can

still create a very fair picture from material owned in America, such as in New York, Boston, Philadelphia, and Providence. In these cases, the art interest of the objects has been emphasized rather than the archaeological interest, and this fact is readily shown in the group of Etruscan material here published.

L. E. R.

THE BRONZE SITULA

Bologna shares with Rome and Florence the honor of being an exceptional place to study Etruscan works of art in its museums. The collection of the Museo Civico is most important. Chief in this collection, which comes largely from necropoli about Bologna, is a bronze situla, or pail, decorated with designs in repoussé surrounding the vase from base to top. The artistic merit of the object, together with its unusual preservation cause it to be easily the outstanding piece in the collection, as it would be in any group of Etruscan material. Signor E. Brizio, writing in the *Bull. Inst.* for 1872, p. 231, holds that "this situla is the most important monument of national art, not only in the Museo Civico of Bologna, but I may say, in any other museum of Etruscan antiquities. The art is pure, primitive Etruscan, without the remotest idea of Greek influence, but rather in certain respects showing an affinity with Oriental art. I do not hesitate to repeat that there has not yet been discovered a monument of higher importance, as regards the history, religion and art of Etruria than this situla." This praise may seem unduly strong in its emphasis when a few of the more recent finds, such as the Apollo of Veii, are considered, but if comparison is made between bronze objects, it is still not far from the truth so far as quality is concerned.

This situla came from the cemetery of La Certosa, chief of those about Bologna, and located to the west of the city. The name Certosa is one given to any place where there is a Carthusian convent, and the Etruscan cemetery is in reality direct-

ly beneath such a structure. This site was discovered by accident and explored by the Cavaliere Antonio Zannoni from 1869 to 1871, during which time he found about 380 tombs. The burials in these were varied in character, 115 of them containing burnt bones. In one of these was the situla mentioned above, full of burnt bones. It has been covered by a stone slab, the weight of which had broken in the top. No other vases or other offerings were included in the simple pit-burial.

Just why is this lengthy description of an object in Bologna? Because it has been the good fortune for some time for the Museum of the Rhode Island School of Design to own a second situla which in quality, size, type of decoration and relative importance merits equal consideration with the Bologna example, although it is of different shape. Like it, our example came from the Certosa cemetery and had the top crushed in by the weight of the stone which acted as a cover. Both examples probably date from the first half of the sixth century B. C.

The ornament in horizontal bands on the surface of the Providence situla is of the same high order as that on the Certosa situla in Bologna. The lowest register is plain; the next has a rope pattern with bosses which catch the light. Then begins the figure work in wider bands. The lowest of the three shows a procession of deer which is proceeding to the right. There is great variety in the shape of the horns as well as in their length. Here again the filling up of the empty space follows accepted precedent, with the use of round bosses and leaf-designs in low but effective relief.

The middle band shows a procession of warriors armed with helmets, spears and oval shields. They are marching to the left, and not to battle, for the long shields are carried horizontally and the spears are held loosely and pointing to the ground. Undoubtedly the original outfit of the soldiers called for greaves on the legs, which do not happen to be represented in the low relief. Once again we find the

ancient and primitive endeavor to fill up the empty space, this time, it is with round bosses, leaf-forms, hooks, etc.

The principal ornament is in the top register. Here we find a scene rich in detail. It is a festival or funeral scene. The parts are varied. One group shows a man seated on an Etruscan chair with a lyre on which he is playing in his hands. Before him is a standing figure of a woman. Between them is a shapely vase, perchance of bronze. Behind the man is a standing figure of a man in soft hat and long cloak. Other men, in duplicate, face right and lead to the next group where there is a bronze basin on a stand, with a bird perched on its lip. Standing figures of men face the basin in the centre. Two men in hats and cloaks face left to finish the composition. Then follow standing figures, in similar dress, seated figures, one holding a fan, and others playing the set of pipes so often called "pipes of Pan," other basins with birds perched thereon, etc. Altogether it is a lively and fascinating picture of one phase of Etruscan life.

One's mind runs at random before it. Perchance, like others before us, we note details of dress, hat, or musical instruments, which show that features of peasant life still existing in Northern Italy have an honorable and direct ancestry. Or again, students familiar with characteristic Scythian ornament will be interested in the parallels suggested by the drawing of the animals. But above all, we note the general relationship between the several bands, and the fact that the decoration is a unit in the sense that one man, a creative artist of the end of the sixth century B. C., made the design and wrought the situla.

These are but a few of the ideas which come to mind as one gives consideration to this object, but none quite equal the one that it is an object of the creative art of man when the world, as we study it in history, was quite young, when even a pail could be and was very often an object of refinement of shape, and when its graceful surface was deemed worthy of an artist's skill.

L. E. ROWE

THE BRONZE JUG

SINCE those things which are commonest and universal are the truest indication of a people's culture, all students of the fugitive past are immensely interested in the numerous objects pertaining to the daily life of vanished peoples, which seem to lie, waiting the excavator, in the earth of all long-settled countries. It would be surprising if the so-called classical civilization had not bequeathed to us an interesting assortment of household objects. Furniture, which like most of the furniture of today, was generally made of wood, has largely disappeared, but utensils, commonly made of pottery or metal, have withstood disintegration. In the classical collections of the Museum we may find great bowls which were used to mix the Grecian equivalent of punch, tall wine jars, pitchers, cups of various shapes, oil cruets, glass vials, shallow dishes, little jugs iridescent with burial, even a baby's nursing bottle, as well as spoons, ladles, pails, jars and



BRONZE JUG

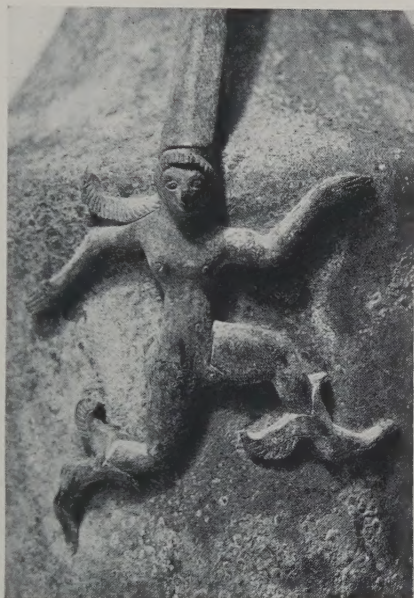
Etruscan

late 6th—early 5th century, B. C.
Museum Appropriation, 1929

other objects made of metal. In this collection of interesting objects associated with the daily life of the ancients are several vessels of bronze used by the Etruscans. Not the least interesting among them is a bronze jug acquired by the Museum in 1929. It well exemplifies the elegance demanded by the Etruscans in utilitarian objects.

Various kinds of jugs have been found in Etruscan tombs: jugs with egg-shaped bodies and round mouths, high-shouldered jugs, and jugs whose shoulders are placed very low, making an abrupt angle in the contour, squat jugs with high handles, jugs with trilobate mouths and jugs with mouths that stretch upward like the beak of a bird. The jug in our collection is distinguished by a beaked mouth, a long neck with spreads in steep curves to a low shoulder line where the contour makes a sharp turn inwards towards the base. Pinched spurs on the lip, flanking the fluted handle, emulate the more common rounded trefoil form of mouth, and where the handle joins the body of the jug a running figure worked in relief forms a striking ornament.

This ornamental relief is noteworthy not so much for refinement of modelling as for vigor and style. Tearing along at a great pace, a youthful runner turns his head to look at the spectator. He is wearing the winged boots of speed, which are not only an attribute of Mercury, the messenger of the gods, but which appear on the feet of harpies and gorgons on Greek black-figured vases. His boots are the youth's only clothing. If he represents Mercury, surely he would wear his travelling hat and carry the caduceus. No, I believe we have here just a running youth. His long hair curves out above his shoulder like a wing, flung up by the swiftness of his motion. A bronze jug of this type in the Metropolitan Museum of Art bears a similar figure as ornament at the base of its handle.¹ It is amusing to believe that the ornament holds the



DETAIL FROM BRONZE JUG
Relief ornament beneath handle

subtle suggestion that the boy who brings the jug be fleet of foot.

From internal evidence we may assume that the jug was made by an Etruscan craftsman in the late sixth or early fifth century before Christ. Though the origins of the Etruscan people is still a vexed question, it seems probable that their extraordinary skill in metal-working was transported from Asia Minor. In other words, there is a theory that the Etruscans were immigrant craftsmen attracted by the rich copper mines of central Italy. Even the Greeks acknowledged their supremacy as bronze workers.

This handsome jug was too fine an object ever to have been used commonly in the kitchen. It could, and probably did, grace a banquet table. Very probably it was once the prized possession of some noble Etruscan lady and was watched by her with a nervous pride as the not too careful hands of the serving boy poured the wine from its generous mouth.

M. A. BANKS

¹G. M. A. Richter, Greek, Etruscan and Roman Bronzes, page 190, No. 493.

THE BRONZE LEBES

EVEN in a small and carefully selected group of objects like that in the Museum in Providence, there are many fascinating problems that await the student. In the Etruscan material, for example, one is brought up against the interesting question of the degree of classic Greek influence on Etruscan life and art, and the corresponding influence, to a less degree to be sure, of Etruscan influence on the Greeks. One would expect the former, and were it not for Pliny in his *Natural History*, the poet Pherecrates, and others, it might not be easy to realize that Etruscan bronzes found a ready market in Greece. One suspects that such bronzes reflected the changing fashion of the day, and that many of the designs so closely followed the Greek models as to be almost indistinguishable. If perchance an Etruscan bronze were to come to light in Greece, it might be possible to determine its origin by the chemical composition of the bronze or some touch of the artist in which the Greek subject was more decorative than exact. Despite all this, Etruscan bronzes were popular in Hellas.

One suspects, however, that a much better designation for some of the work, especially most of it finding an origin in the south, where the pronounced influence of the rich colonies of the Greeks in South Italy was most strongly felt, would be that of "Iono-Etruscan" art, as Professor George B. Chase called it.¹ In an earlier Bulletin² there was discussed a lady's toilet-box from Praeneste, which belongs in this group. The reader is referred to that issue for its consideration there.

A bronze object in our collections which has not as yet been published is a bowl, in the shape of the classical vases known as "lebes." What its stand or support was like, we may only infer from other examples elsewhere which have survived the years. None but a master wrought the

shapely bowl or chased the graceful leaf design on the shoulder, conventional though it may be. Who but a master wrought that delightful group of winged horses around the ring of the cover; speed is in every line; the galloping hooves, the flying hair, and the spreading wings. Pegasus? why, of course! who but he would give the classic touch? What need of Bellerophon? Pegasus was always the important one in the group. The archaic modelling adds quaintness to its style, and the bronze technique lends itself readily to the spirit expressed.

There is often nothing harder in the realm of ancient art than to find out the exact provenance of an object, especially if a dealer has had the object. Sometimes the information given is truthful, and more often it is misleading, intentionally or otherwise. The result is that the best information we have comes from the characteristics of the object itself. In the case of the bronze "lebes," we are wholly justified both from shape and design to look for its origin in Southern Etruria at a time when its boundaries extended to Poseidonia. It is inference alone which suggests that Praeneste was the site where it was found.

The name "lebes" applies to this piece because it means kettle or cauldron. This implies "boiling," and in reality it was so used, part of the time. As Walters says,³ its chief use was for boiling water; but it was not limited to that. Homer mentions its use for cooking (Il. XXI, 362) and as a washing basin (Od. XIX, 386); while Herodotus (IV. 61) tells us that the Scythians used it for cooking meat. Walters also mentions other uses and calls attention to the golden lebes set up at each angle of the temple of Zeus at Olympia. (Pausanias V. 10, 4).

It is not surprising to find a number of uses to which ancient dishes were put, for it was not the custom to have the large variety of forms now in use. The surprising thing, perhaps, is that our ancestors

¹American Journal of Archeology, New Series, Vol. XII, 1908, p. 312.

²Bulletin of the Rhode Island School of Design, Vol. VII, No. 4, October, 1919, p. 39.

³H. B. Walters, *Ancient Pottery*, Vol. I, p. 174.

found such beautiful forms for the practical uses to which the dishes were put. It is fair also to assume that the pottery and metal workers could have developed any forms they desired. But the lebes remained a favorite and useful form for centuries.

chance especially mentioned this use of the lebes for this last service to the deceased.

Confucius, the Chinese sage, once said, "I love antiquity and earnestly seek it." We may not all care to study antiquity for the reasons that he did, although our lives would be richer, our powers of apprecia-



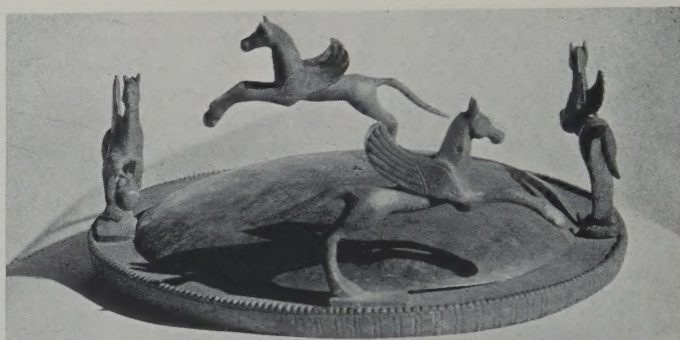
BRONZE LEBES

Etruscan, 6th century, B. C.

Museum Appropriation, 1930

One of the many uses to which it was put was to serve as a cinerary urn. What more fitting use could be made, for its owner could thus have through eternity a treasure and a useful object, and the ashes would be well preserved. Other forms of pottery and metal were also used for this purpose, but the tragic poets have by

tion greater if we did, but we might all stop for a time before such an object as the lebes under discussion, that we may get a clearer idea of the very real combination of usefulness and beauty so charmingly expressed in it, and consider for comparison some of the forms to which we are, in our changing fashions, so partial. L. E. R.



LID OF BRONZE LEBES
Showing Winged Horses on Rim

BRONZE MIRRORS

JUDGING from the quantity which have been found by the archeologists, an Etruscan lady's tomb was not completely furnished unless it contained a mirror. This necessity of the feminine toilet might be a mirror with a handle, not unlike, in essentials, to the usual form of today; it might be within a cover; or it might be a mirror on a stand. The most common type was apparently the mirror with a handle. In the latest type, the handle is cast in one piece with the mirror-disc, but the mirrors of the 6th and 5th century, B. C., were cast with a tang which fitted into a handle of wood or bone. The disc was frequently gilt or silvered, and its edge was turned back, perhaps to protect the engraved design that usually ornamented its reverse. This last peculiarity misled the early archaeologists, and the mirrors were mistaken for shallow ladles or *paterae*. Their true use has been established not only by their representations in ancient pictorial designs, but by their discovery within *cistae* or toilet caskets.

The designs engraved on Etruscan mirrors are almost always concerned with Greek mythology. The source of inspiration was quite obviously the painted designs on Greek pottery vases, which the Etruscans imported in great numbers. The scenes are invariably framed with a wreath of leaves or flowers. Often the names of

the characters portrayed in the designs are inscribed in Etruscan lettering beside the figures.

The Museum collection includes two very good bronze mirrors dating from the 5th to the 4th century B. C. On one, which is gilded, is an engraved design of Artemis mounted on a stag of equine characteristics; a second stag appears to be running almost neck to neck with her steed; while in the foreground, small deer are grazing amid the bushes. The Etruscan word for Artemis identifies the goddess. The scene is enclosed by an undulating vine, with a palmette above the tang. There are indications of a moulded tongue pattern on the rim of the disc. In the course of centuries in the tomb, the bronze has acquired a russet patina and shows some corrosion. The disc measures six and one-eighth inches in diameter, and the total height of the mirror, including the tang, is eight and three-quarters inches.

A second mirror (see illustration) bears an engraved design featuring Achilles with his arms about two women. On his right hand stands Thetis, his mother, and his left arm is about the shoulders of another woman, whose Etruscan name suggests no Greek equivalent. Perhaps in this last-mentioned personage one of the Nereids is represented. At any rate, she looks with favor upon Achilles, for her arm affectionately encircles his waist. The women are

adorned with neck bands and armlets, but the scarves with which they toy in no way conceal their nudity. A floral wreath frames the scene. After the mirror was found, the design was picked out with white paint to make it show more clearly.

but the total height with the tang is slightly more, i. e., nine and one-eighth inches. In the case of both mirrors, the handles, in which the tangs fitted, are missing.

These implements of the feminine toilet bring us very close to the life of this ancient



BRONZE MIRROR

Etruscan, 5th-4th century, B. C.

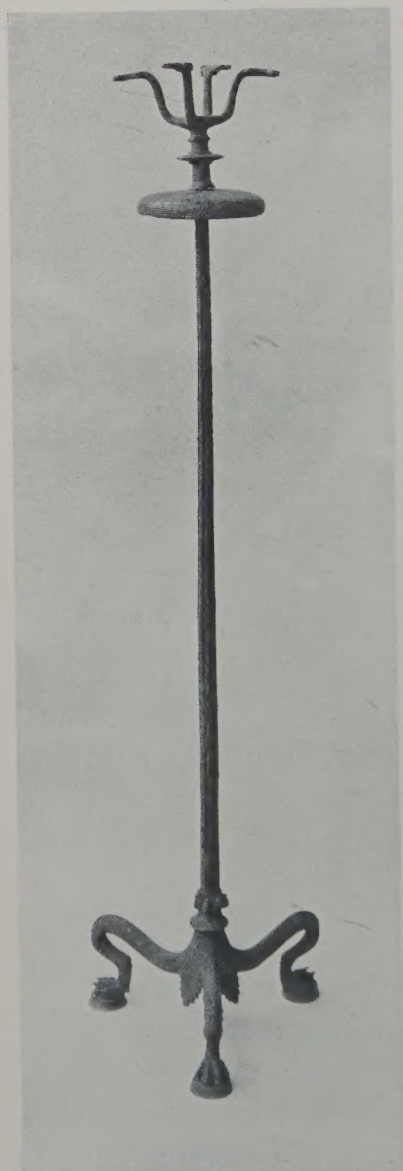
Engraved Design showing Achilles and Two Female Divinities
Museum Appropriation, 1923

The general condition of the mirror last described is very good. The bronze has a pleasing mottled russet, lime and malachite-green patina. The disc, which has a moulded tongue pattern on the rim, is slightly smaller than that of the Artemis mirror, being just six inches in diameter,

people. Over and above the evidence they exhibit of Etruscan taste and skill, the designs which ornament them show us how strong was the influence of Greek thought and art, and the inscriptions have a documentary value, since Etruscan literature is non-existent.

M. A. B.

THE CANDELABRUM



BRONZE CANDELABRUM

Etruscan, 5th century, B. C.

Museum Appropriation, 1931

AMONG the interesting bronzes used for funerary purposes by the Etruscans were the candelabra. There is quite a considerable number of them which have survived the centuries and they vary greatly in detail, size and quality. Some are five feet in height, and very elaborate, others are but ten inches or so tall. The Etruscan genius for design created forms which differed widely in detail although the principal elements of the three legs, a decorated column or shaft, four branches above from which lamps were supposed to be hung, and an inverted cup at the top, were the usual form. Very often there was a small bronze statuette placed on the top. While one finds that many of this type have come from the excavations at Vulci, that does not mean that other necropoli have not yielded similar examples. The artistic merit of these objects of bronze made them popular with the Greeks, if the testimony of the Athenian poet, Pherecrates, has weight. Perhaps the popularity of this class of bronzes in Greece was due to the way the Etruscan designers made use of Greek motives whether for local use or export trade.

One of these candelabra was bought in 1931 from the Museum Appropriation and is not only characteristic in its form, and superb in its casting, but distinctly to be ranked among the best of its class. Many of this type in the Etruscan Museum at the Vatican, and the Museo di Papa Giulio at Rome, the Museo Archaeologico at Florence and the Museo Civico at Bologna have been seen for comparison. Most of these, while evidently of the same fine design, have been badly eaten by bronze disease, or still have the heavy incrustation which often comes from long burial and hides so much of the detail. Also, they vary greatly in size, some being much larger than our example, and many much smaller. Few, however, show equal or better clearness of detail.

One who is interested in bronze work appreciates the crisp modelling of the paws

on the feet, the oriental influence in the palmetto design on the base, and the leaf pattern on the top.

The inverted form at the top has on the under surface an inscription in Etruscan characters, not yet translated. This may or may not be the original one for this particular candelabrum, for the top is in two sections, and nothing would prevent it from being assembled from two such pieces of work. But certainly a top of this type and beauty did once crown such a graceful shaft.

The object at the very top with its four arms was so made in order that sacrificial bronze lamps might hang thereon. In our case, the lamps and the single bronze figure of a god are lacking, but plenty of examples exist in the collections noted above to show in general what they were like.

L. E. R.

BUCCHERO VASES

THOUGH many of the most beautiful pottery vases of antiquity that have survived to our day were found in Etruscan tombs, it is now known that Greek and not Etruscan potters were responsible for them. The animated scenes painted upon them were Greek in conception and execution, and the vases were popular importations rather than a native product. The painted vases actually made in Etruria were but inferior imitations. The Etruscans were superb workers in metal, but as potters they must yield first place to others. Their most distinctive and important contribution in this art, I think it would be generally conceded, was in the various types of black pottery now known as *bucchero* ware. Its entirely black surface is not due to a black glaze such as the Greeks used on their pottery; rather,



BUCCHERO VASES

Etruscan, 6th century, B. C.

(a)

(b)

Vase with medallions showing archaic head in relief on rim

Cup with impressed band of human figures around body

its blackness is an integral part of the ware, an effect on the clay acquired by being baked in a slow-burning smoky fire. Instead of being glazed, the surface is burnished, and where decorations occur, they are incised, stamped or moulded.

Black ware of similar characteristics has been found on the site of ancient Troy, and whatever the final outcome of the vexed question of Etruscan origins, it may be observed that the bucchero vases found in the tombs of Etruria frequently show Orientalizing influence. As do the Trojan relics, Etruscan bucchero is strongly imitative of metal forms. Whether it was an original product of the Etruscan potters or not, bucchero ware was made so generally and persistently by them and is so distinctive among the pottery of its period, it is not surprising that it has been designated "the national pottery of Etruria."¹ The earliest examples, which date from the seventh century B. C., are usually hand-made vessels of primitive form with very simple impressed or incised designs, if any. These give place to wheel-made vases, many of which show the influence of Greek forms, and the decorations, of much more elaborate character, are moulded or stamped in imitation of chasing or repoussé work on metal. Bucchero ware is believed to have been manufactured in Etruria until the 4th century B. C. In its later forms, its ornament is over elaborate and its imitation of metal technique is carried to tiresome extremes.

¹H. B. Walters, *History of Ancient Pottery*, Vol. II, p. 301.

Two vases recently acquired by the Museum belong to the finest period of bucchero ware, when it had developed beyond its early crudities and had not yet succumbed to the defects of its qualities. One is a round dish, funnel-shaped as to exterior, but having a flat interior with a shallow curved depression at the center, set on a cone-shaped hollow foot flattened at the base. The dish has a broad almost vertical lip decorated on the outside with incised triple zigzags and saltire crosses, accented at equal distances by four medallions bearing a moulded relief of a bearded archaic head. The rounded tops of these medallions project above the edge of the lip, and the relief designs which decorate them have been rather badly broken in three cases out of the four. The fourth medallion, however, is almost perfectly preserved, and a fine vigorous piece of modelling it is. The face is in profile to left, and a broad fillet encircles the head. Details are incised. A large almond-shaped eye, well-defined lips, and a sharp perky beard contribute to a countenance alert and determined. Not very noticeable incised lines encircle the high foot; its edge is ridged; and its under side shows plainly the marks of the potter's wheel. The dish stands four inches high, exclusive of the medallions, and its diameter at the lip is approximately four and seven-eighths inches.

Perhaps the more charming of the two vases is the chalice-shaped cup on which a procession of tiny figures in very low relief march around the exterior of the bowl.



IMPRESSED DESIGN ON BUCCHERO CUP

Actual size

(See Illustration (b) on page 11)

This decorative band was stamped upon the vase while the clay was still soft, by means of a revolving cylinder, impressing the design in a similar way to that in which the documents of old Assyrians and Babylonians were sealed with cylinder seals. While at first glance we seem to be looking at a procession of different individuals, we notice upon close attention (see drawing, page 12) that the pattern resolves itself into the figures of a man and a woman. The woman appears to have her right arm hooked into the elbow of the man who precedes her, and her left arm is extended behind her at such an angle that her hand seems to clasp that of the repeat of the man with his extended right arm. The variations in the figures are due to the differing amounts of pressure brought to bear upon the clay as the cylinder was pushed around the vase. At the bottom of the bowl's sloping sides, where the contour of the vessel takes a sharp turn inwards toward the stem, there is a well-defined ridge in imitation of the ridge formed when one piece of metal folds upon another, and this ridge is notched with a blunt instrument. Underneath the bowl are two incised bands of thin lines. The stem swells at the middle with a collared knob, and just above where the hollow cone-shaped foot flattens out at the base, there is an impressed guilloche band. The edge of the foot is ridged. This vase is six and one-eighth inches high, and the diameter at the lip is five and three-eighths inches.

The Etruscan collections of the Museum include two other pieces of pottery. One is a small askos of unglazed buff clay with a wavy handle lengthwise of the body stamped *Velummal*. The other is a small kantharos of bucchero ware, its only decoration a notched ridge at the bottom of the bowl beneath the handles.² Neither of the two are very significant. It was only upon the acquisition of the two pieces of bucchero ware described in this article

that the pottery of Etruria had adequate representation. Although these vases may not possess the grace and refinement of the Greek wares, they have a sturdy individuality fascinating to the student, warranting them an honored place in the Museum's collection of ancient potteries.

M. A. B.

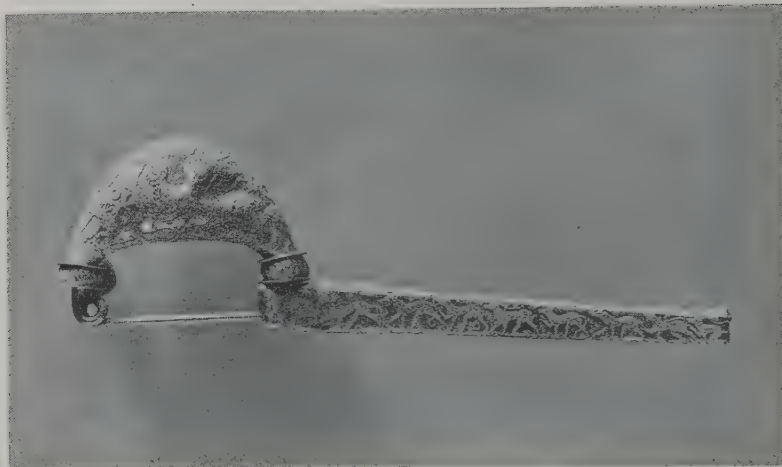
THE GOLD FIBULA

IN these scientific days when important discoveries are made almost daily, and so many of them that we rarely thrill at any of them unless they especially concern our immediate problem, and more or less accept them as naturally to be expected, we are missing the excitement and extreme pleasure which belonged to an age less sophisticated; as, for example, in the Italian Renaissance, when each new discovery, whether of scientific fact or new codex or fragment of classical art giving evidence of rare and practical beauty, stirred so many to the utmost. For instance, we read of Dr. Rosenbach's find several years ago of the Columbus codex in Spain, or that of a volume of Omar Khayyam in India giving us one hundred and thirty-five verses not found in Fitzgerald's translation, almost without a thrill—if we read the item at all, in view of the latest about golf kings or performances of aviators, tennis players or pugilists. Yes, for thrills we seek them in detective stories, and the doings of hi-jackers and bootleggers which fill so much of newspaper space.

Yet even today we are being favored by treasures of archaeology and art which are coming to light, each with a story to tell, a picture to draw, a skill to marvel at, and a standard of quality often so much above our own as to warrant our sober consideration; discoveries which in an earlier day would have thrilled a nation.

Safety-pins play an important if hidden part in our life today. We accept them without a thought as being the invention of some clever person who perhaps has made a fortune in consequence, while if the

²S. B. Luce, *Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum*, U. S. A., Providence, R. I., School of Design, Fascicule 1, Plate 30, IV B 1, IV B m.



GOLD FIBULA

Etruscan, 7th century, B. C.

Front view

Museum Appropriation, 1930

truth be told they have for centuries been known and used by peoples whom we often regard as belonging to remote antiquity. Like so many adaptations of today the practical object has lost the element of design which gave it distinction in the past, and this was decidedly true of fibulae or safety-pins, many of which in former days were objects of art.

An excellent example of the truth of the foregoing remarks is seen in the large gold fibula of Etruscan origin in the Museum collection. Probably no work of the Etruscans has more appeal to the modern mind than the art of the goldsmiths. We have it in the form of rings, with or without stone settings, bracelets, hair ornaments, and especially fibulae. Aside from the artistic shapes and the types of design, Etruscan jewellery offers the best chance to study the art of granulation, one not made use of today, except when attempted by the forgers. Since the fibula is such an excellent example of the art, perhaps a word about it is in order. We are indebted to two scholars for extended study of this work, George Karo and C. Densmore Curtis.¹ In brief, the art consists of the manufacture of minute gold glob-

ules, extraordinarily small, almost resembling gold-dust. These particles are fixed in some way, as yet uncertain, but, of course, by some form of soldering, on flat and curved surfaces in patterns sometimes geometrical, with triangles, meanders, stars, etc., or again with the real or fabulous animals which appear in Etruscan design, and more infrequently with the use of the human figure. In one instance at least, an inscription is so made.² The skill in manufacture and handling, the exactness and appropriateness of the design is extraordinary. This work is called by the modern Italians *granulata* or *ad pulviscolo*. Some imitations, forgeries, of modern manufacture have been created, notably by M. Melillo of Naples and the elder Castellani, both of whom sought to recreate the art but without exactly matching its ancient beauty or approaching the minuteness of the ancient granulation. Castellani's enthusiasm for this gold-work has been often quoted, but merits repetition here. Said he: "It must with

¹Professor George Karo in Vols. I and II of "Studi e Materiale Archeologia," and C. Densmore Curtis in "Papers of the American Academy in Rome," 1917. Vol. I, p. 63.

²Fibula in Museo Kircheriano in Rome.

humility be confessed that we see at present, arising as if by enchantment from the forgotten cemeteries of Etruria and of Greece, objects in gold of a workmanship so perfect that not only all the refinements of our civilization cannot imitate it, but cannot even explain theoretically the process of its execution." It should be noted that the art of working in granulation was employed not only in Etruria, but also in classical Greece and even in Egypt of the XIIth Dynasty (2000-1788 B. C.), but in Etruria it was the national favorite for jewellery decoration.³

The fibula under discussion is of the "leech" type. Like others of the same kind in other museums it has a hollow bow, a tapering sheath for the pin, and a double spring formed by bending the pin. The bow is decorated over the crown with a band of fret design; and this continues along the back of the sheath. On either side of the bow in the centre is a figure of a double-headed goddess, dressed in a long skirt reaching below the knees. The rest

of the field is filled up with walking or running figures of animals and griffons. Chief among these is a figure on each side of a horned and winged sphinx(?) with human head, which is, distinctly, of the so-called "orientalizing" type. The several details of this composite deity are evidently borrowed from Mesopotamian art; the head bearing striking similarity to the Babylonian god or hero Gilgamesh; there is also the possibility that it was taken from the representation of the human-headed bull with which Gilgamesh had a battle. The back of the sheath has a band of horses, goats and other animals, running to left and on the lip of the sheath is an interesting leaf-pattern. Where the bow fastens on to the rest of the pin there are two cylindrical forms, with curved outlines, having thin gold discs at top and bottom. These forms are decorated with diagonal lines. All ornament on the fibula is done in minute globules of gold soldered in place.

The fibula is of unusual interest because of its size (.099 cm), those now known of this size or larger being very few in num-

³See W. M. Flinders Petrie: "Arts and Crafts of Ancient Egypt," p. 90, sq.



GOLD FIBULA

Etruscan, 7th century, B. C.

Back view

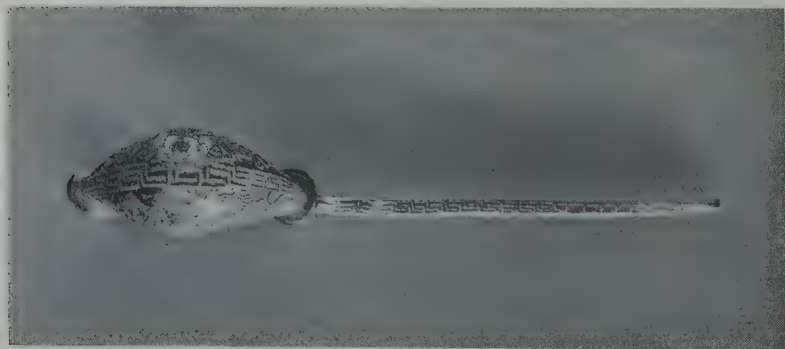
Museum Appropriation, 1930

ber. The quality of the work also is of the very finest. The date of this is the 7th century B. C., and most of the specimens of this class come from Caere, Praeneste and Vetulonia, chiefly the last. This city was founded in the 8th century. It was at one time on the sea, and a natural landing place for the Tyrrheni but now has several miles of made-land between it and the sea. The Tyrrheni were the proto-Etruscans. Like some other populous centres in Etruscan times, Vetulonia was in the Maremma region between present-day Rome and Pisa. Although today a wilderness, the contents of its tombs in bronze-work and gold jewellery have proved astonishing, much of the gold-work being of this fine quality. It is on this internal evidence that the name of Vetulonia is connected with our fibula, for, of course, unless actually unearthed by an accredited archeologist, the actual provenance is always hidden. However, in fairness we ought to state, that in the seventh century Caere was also producing work of almost if not equal quality, unless there it was imported from some other centre.

The mention of the "orientalizing" form of the "sphinx" brings up the fascinating relations between Etruria and the rest of the Near-East so far as can be discovered.

Suffice it here to say that among the contents of Etruscan tombs were Egyptian objects without number. They were familiar with Phoenician and Greek art. Silverware, pottery, textiles, and ivories came from Mesopotamia, Cyprus and Egypt. One would think that the importing of so much arts and craft work would modify Etruscan art to the extreme. Such a modification to a degree must be admitted, but at its best Etruscan art, especially the gold-work, has its own features of art merit, quite distinctive and very deserving of the esteem of art-lovers of all periods of time. That it was so esteemed in ancient days is proved from the pages of Roman literature and by Etruscan objects being found elsewhere in tombs bordering on the Mediterranean. This is a tribute also to the Etruscans' position of maritime supremacy for a time, when their ships carried so much commerce, and excited the jealousy of Greeks and Romans alike.

One would like to have at hand the piece of Etruscan work which made as great a master as Benvenuto Cellini admit his limitations. Perhaps, even probably, it too was enriched with granulation. For Cellini in his Autobiography tells us of a visit to Pope Clement VII, who showed



GOLD FIBULA

Top view

Etruscan, 7th century, B. C.

him a gold Etruscan necklace, which had been recently found and which was of extraordinary workmanship. As a craftsman and artist he appreciated this object, but his remark to the Pope was, "Alas, it is better not to imitate these Etruscans, for we should be nothing but their humble servants. Let us rather strike out a new path, which will, at least, have the merit of originality." Perhaps he would have said the same if our recently discovered fibula had been placed in his hand.

We are not asked to imitate or copy anything of the past. It would not be fitting, for the objects that have come down to us were created for different conditions, and were successful because they so perfectly expressed the life and thought of the time. Yes, we would quite agree with Cellini! But, like him, we can appreciate the genius that created the work of art, the civilization which called it forth, the value of design and workmanship in such an object; and we can ask ourselves if in our common objects we have sought to add beauty to utility.

L. E. R.

GOLD EARRINGS

THE decorations of the ears seem to have been instinctive with the human race from the time of its earliest interest in self-adornment. It would have been odd indeed had the luxury-loving Etruscans neglected this means of enhancing their personal appearance. Earrings are numerous in the tomb finds, and while many were doubtless importations—for what is so easy to transport from place to place as small articles of jewelry?—there are certain types which are generally accepted as native work.

There are nine gold earrings in the Etruscan collection of the Museum, four pairs and one unpaired specimen. The oldest is of the type known by the Italian term, *a baule*. This term refers to their general shape, which resembles a cylindrical coffer. Some earrings of this type have decorated discs at the ends, while in others, like those in our Museum collection, the ends are open. In our examples,

a wide curved band is richly incrustated with filigree decoration consisting of four rosettes disposed about a slightly central rosette. There is a simulated tassel fringe at the bottom. While the pin which pierced the ear is missing from one of these earrings, the general condition is excellent. The filigree work is skilfully done, and simple as are the means employed, a rather sumptuous effect is produced. These earrings date back to the sixth century B. C.

A gap of several centuries occurs between the earrings just described and the others in the collection. The earring *a baule* was distinctively Etruscan. By the beginning of the fifth century B. C., the Etruscan jeweler was dominated by Greek styles subject to modifications of Etruscan taste. At first, a simple ring type ending in a head was the mode. As time went on, the styles became more elaborate. In the fourth century B. C. colored beads were introduced on the ring. It is to this era that the unusual pair of earrings with ornaments in the form of negroid heads belong. (See illustration). Here a dark amber bead is carved into the semblance of the head of an Ethiop crowned with a gold mount bearing gold granulation representing hair; a conical cap of gold is decorated with granules and filigree set with green paste, as is the cup or collar into which the neck fits. The little head is suspended on a thin loop of gold wire. The total length of these fascinating little objects, including the curve of the loop, is only one and three-sixteenths inches. Considering their delicacy, the condition of the earrings is good, the only damage being the loss of the tops of the Ethiops' ears.

A pair of gold earrings dating from the fourth or third century B. C. is one variety of the "leech" type common in later Etruscan work. (See illustration). Each consists of a curved plate of gold, decorated with gold filigree, ending in a hook behind. At the bottom of the plate is a cluster of four hollow, resin-filled beads, with three clusters of smaller beads and interspersed bosses.

A development of the "leech" type of

earring prevalent in Etruria was that in which a horseshoe-shaped plaque decorated with bosses was added above the "leech," and clusters of bosses attached themselves below. Some of these earrings were quite large. A pair about two inches in length is pictured in the illustration on this page. Above the "leech," a semi-oval or horseshoe-shaped plaque is decorated

earrings are made of thin gold easily bent or broken. In the case of the pair of earrings, the "leech" is in each case broken off behind the plate, and the single earring is dented and bent out of shape. It is said that this type of earring was made especially for funeral purposes and was not fashioned to withstand use or handling.

From the fourth century on, Etruscan



GOLD EARRINGS

Etruscan, 4th-3rd century, B. C.

Museum Appropriation and Special Gift, 1925

Ostby and Barton Co., in memory of Englehardt C. Ostby, 1929

with bands of small applied bosses and filigree; below, there is a cluster of five large bosses with smaller bosses interspersed. A similar earring, not illustrated, has its "horse-shoe" decorated with a row of eleven tiny concave discs, each of which has a granule at its center; while below the "leech," there are nine lenticular beads separated by clusters of granules. These

jewelry becomes largely identified with Greek jewelry. Not only were the Etruscan jewelers under the spell of the Greek stylists, but quantities of jewelry actually made in Greece or by Greek workman were worn; in fact, it may safely be said that the greater part of the jewelry found in the tombs may be described as Hellenistic.

M. A. B.

THE ETRUSCAN EXHIBITION

ALL the objects described in the preceding pages were shown in an unusually pleasing and appropriate setting this January during the Exhibition of Etruscan Tomb Paintings. Through the courtesy of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, we were able to show some twenty-two large paintings, which reproduced on canvas, in actual size and coloring of the originals, the frescoes on the walls of some of the most famous rock tombs at Corneto-Tarquiniæ and the Golini Tomb at Orvieto. The large central gallery of the Radeke Building presented a colorful appearance with great friezes of dancing youths and maidens, with scenes of the banquet and the chase. Two walls and a detail from the Tomb of the Triclinium, the Typhon on the great central pillar in the Tomb of the Typhon, the gable end walls of the Tomb of the Leopards and the Tomb of the Lionesses, a detail from one of the walls of the Hades Tomb and two scenes from the Tomb of the Shields, that part of the wall of the Golini Tomb which shows Krankru the Leopard eating beneath the banquet table, two sides and the end wall of the inner chamber of the entertaining Tomb of Hunting and Fishing and the gable end of the outer chamber of the same tomb which shows the hunters returning from the hunt, and the doorway-wall of the Tomb of the Wild Boar, were all shown in the main gallery; while in one of the small exhibition rooms on the western side of the Museum was a complete tomb, the Tomb of the Baron; and in another small room, three walls of the Tomb of the Chariots. In the last case, the windows were blocked off by the painted canvas, and the only light was from the ceiling chandelier. The tomb-like effect met with favorable comment from many visitors, the artificial lighting softening the somewhat garish coloring of the animated friezes.

These copies of Etruscan tomb paintings provide for the student of history and archeology the best means, outside of an

actual visit to the tombs, for appreciating the spirit and colorful zest of Etruscan painting. The copies were made by Italian artists working *in situ* and were acquired by the Boston Museum of Fine Arts over a period of more than a decade. A set of similar copies is owned by the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek. The idea of making facsimiles of the Etruscan tomb paintings was first thought of in the early nineties of the last century, and the work was undertaken under the direction of the archeologist, Helbig. While the artists who executed the copies were not actuated by a passion for scientific exactitude—which troubles the archeologists greatly—they were alive to the aesthetic feeling and artistic intention of the paintings, so that the results are extremely well worth while. Few were the visitors to the Exhibition who did not react joyfully to the color and life of the pictures and whose interest in Etruscan art and history was not quickened thereby.

M. A. B.

THE SCHOOL

Mr. Rowe has kindly granted space for a small notice concerning the regular classes of the school. I want to take this opportunity of answering one or two questions which a number of people have asked concerning our work.

The school is very full. In fact, so much so that another year steps must be taken to either expand or to contract in order to carry successfully those courses which are now scheduled.

The introduction of our required course in English and our new courses in History are meeting a much needed background demand for the artist and designer of the present day.

Our Five-Year Course for teachers of art is developing admirably and the first class will be graduated in 1937 with the Degree, Bachelor of Art Education. Five years permit us to offer the academic educational requirements for the degree without sacrificing technical work.

While evening classes have increased over last year, the depression still makes it

difficult for the evening school to reach the high enrollment from 1928 to 1930.

The study of the children being made in the Junior School or Saturday classes is proving the value of concentrating on that phase of art training.

The school is discovering hidden talent and is discovering abilities in different fields from those anticipated by both children and their parents.

In every branch of the school there is an attempt to make it of more service both to the individual student and to the community in which he will find his future work.

R. B. FARNUM

*Bulletin of the
Rhode Island School of Design
Providence*

All communications should be addressed to the
General Editor, Mr. L. Earle Rowe

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ADMISSIONS

HOURS OF OPENING. The galleries are open to the public on every day of the year, with the exception of Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and the Fourth of July. From 10 A.M. to 5 P.M. week days and from 2 to 5 P.M. Sundays.

Twenty-five cents admission to the museum is charged on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays and the museum is free on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays, and Sundays.

LIBRARY

The Library contains 10,161 volumes, 17,960 mounted photographs and reproductions, 6,416 lantern slides, and about 5,165 postcards. During the months of June, July and August the library is closed.

PHOTOGRAPHS ON SALE

Photographic copies of many of the objects belonging to the museum are on sale at the entrance to the museum.